Provision of telephones in the villages of Uttaranchal

†1716. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of villages/revenue villages likely to be provided with rural telephone facility in the State of Uttaranchal by the end of this year;

(b) whether any time schedule has been fixed to provide telephone to cent per cent villages of this States; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The office of the Administrator, Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund has awarded the work of providing Village Public Telephones (VPTs) to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in all 3,881 uncovered villages in the State of Uttaranchal. This excludes villages which are depopulated, naxalite/insurgency infested, having population of less than hundred persons and those lying in deep forest areas. It has been planned to provide 20% of the VPTs by November, 2005 and the remaining in a phased manner by November, 2007.

Telephone complaints registered with DET/SDO/GM in Bihar

†1717. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that rural telephone exchange particularly in Bithauli under Darbhanga in Bihar has no complaint book to register the complaints regarding non-functioning of telephones and due to absence of employees, people register their complaints direct to DET/SDO/GM;

(b) the number of such complaints registered with higher officer during the last one year;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether it is a fact that officer has been informed many times from Delhi and Patna in this regard; and

(d) whether Government are contemplating to check the recurrence of said incident and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. Complaint book to register complaints regarding non-functioning of telephone is available at Bithauli Telephone Exchange. One staff member is posted at Bithauli Telephone Exchange who is registering and attending subscriber's complaints. However, higher officers like SDE/DET are also getting complaints, sometimes directly.

(b) Seven.

(c) No such record available. However, action is taken immediately on all the written/oral complaints received.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) to (c) above.

Proposal to increase the rate of charges by BSNL

†1718. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL propose to increase the rate of charges of telephone calls in order to make up its losses;

(b) if so, how far it is justified to overburden the consumers instead of making efforts to increase the number of calls; and

(c) the steps taken by BSNL to reduce the losses alongwith the amount of the losses reduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) BSNL is a profit making Public Sector Undertaking from the day of incorporation, however, all possible steps are taken to increase its profitability further.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.